PRELIMINARY STAFF SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

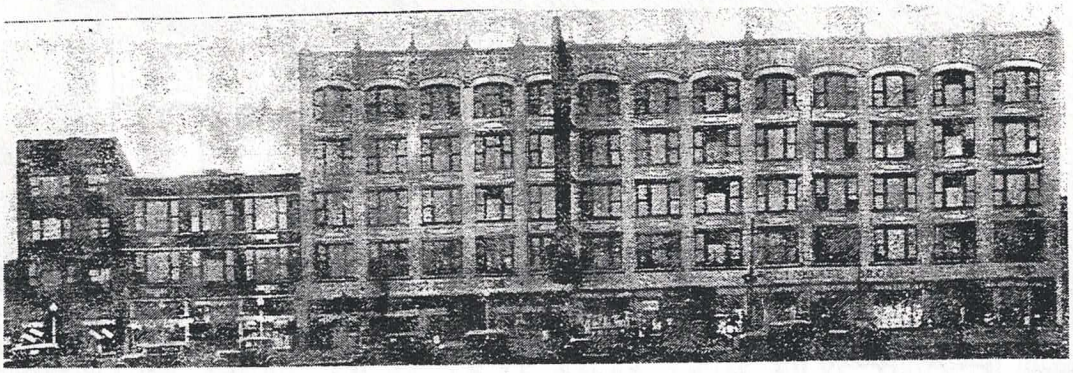
Goldblatt Bros. Department Store

1613-35 W. Chicago Ave.

Submitted to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks on April 2, 1997

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Christopher R. Hill, Acting Commissioner



Communities Have High Grade Stores

MERCHANDISERS, realizing that "downtown" is far distant from many Chicago homes, have adhered to the old proverb and brought "the mountain to Mohammed". Scattered throughout the outlying districts of the city, department stores now give those unable to get to State Street an opportunity to get the best right in their own neighborhood.

ABOVE: The Goldblatt Bros. Department Store, as it appeared in a book about Chicago published for visitors to the 1933 Century of Progress world's fair. Left to right: the store's four-story annex (since demolished); the store's oldest section, a three-story structure built in 1921-22; and a five-story "addition" constructed in 1925-28.

FRONT AND BACK COVER: This illustration of the Goldblatt's store was part of a March 11, 1928 *Chicago Sunday Tribune* advertisement announcing the grand opening of the new building.

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or entire districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks.

The designation process begins with a staff study--summarized in this report--discussing the historical and architectural background and significance of the proposed landmark. The next step is a preliminary vote by the Landmarks Commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until the landmark recommendation is acted upon.

This Preliminary Summary of Information is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation proceedings. Only language contained within the designation ordinance recommended to City Council should be regarded as final.

Goldblatt Bros. Department Store

1613-35 W. Chicago Ave.

Architect: **Alfred S. Alschuler**
Dates: **1921-22** **(1613-1615 W. Chicago)**
1925-28 **(1617-1635 W. Chicago)**

The two buildings that comprise the historic Goldblatt Bros. Department Store, at Chicago and Ashland avenues, meet the criterion for Chicago Landmark status in the following ways:

- As the first store in a nationally prominent regional department store chain, the buildings have a direct relationship to the business history of Chicago and of the United States.
- The two buildings, taken together, illustrate the evolution of the neighborhood department store in the early-20th century.
- As a dominant visual feature of the West Town neighborhood, the buildings are a striking physical anchor to one of the city's early neighborhood business districts.
- The two buildings are a very good late-representation of the nationally important Chicago commercial style, having been designed by one of the city's most prolific architects of the early-20th century.
- Finally, the buildings are identified with important individuals, including Maurice Goldblatt, who contributed significantly to national medical research through his later philanthropic work.

Maurice Goldblatt (1892-1984)

Nathan Goldblatt (1895-1944)

Chicago's 'Polish Downtown'

The story of the Goldblatt brothers and their creation of one of America's leading department store chains is a classic rags-to-riches tale. In addition to being emblematic of Chicago's ethnic immigration in the early 20th century, their story--and that of their original store--charts the development of the city's West Side.

In 1857, the built-up portion of the City of Chicago extended as far west as Racine Avenue--or about a mile east of Ashland Avenue. The area to the west developed slowly during the 1860s, mainly with scattered settlements of Polish immigrants along Milwaukee Avenue and near the factories lining the Chicago River.

Following the Great Fire of 1871, however, this trickle of immigration became a flood. According to a history of the "West Town" neighborhood in the *Local Community Fact Book*:

> The area around Division Street and Ashland Avenue became known as "Polish Downtown" and, by 1900, almost 25,000 Poles lived within a half-mile radius of this intersection [roughly 25% of all the Poles in the city].

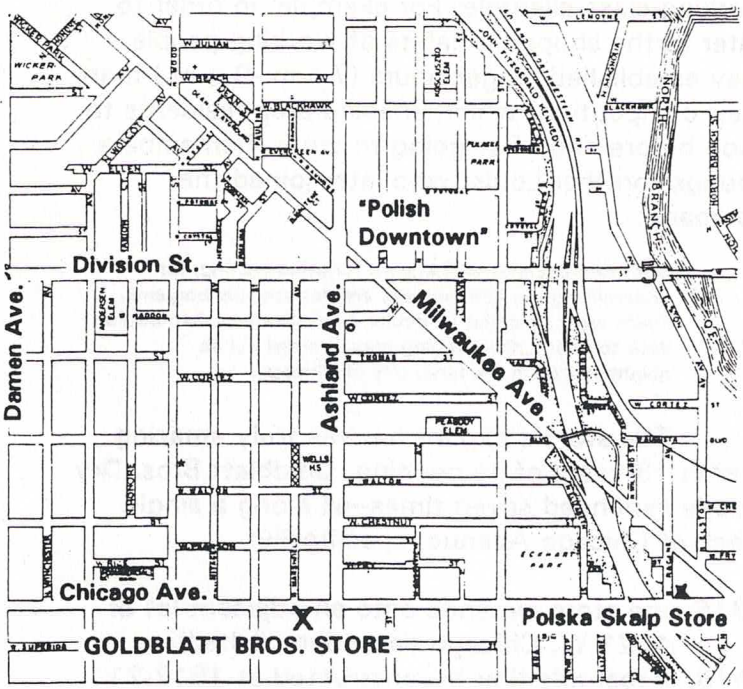
A significant number of these Polish immigrants were Jewish, most of whom had mass emigrated between 1882 and 1914 due to the brutal religious restrictions ("pogroms") of such Eastern European countries as Austria-Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Russia. By 1900, Chicago's Jewish population had reached 80,000, of which an estimated 52,000 were from Eastern Europe.

Milwaukee Avenue had become a major retail strip, and Polish settlement began to move northwest along this corridor. The population of the West Town neighborhood peaked about 1910 and, by the time of the 1920 census, nearly half of the area's 218,000 inhabitants were foreign born. Poles were the largest immigrant group, followed by Russian Jews and Italians.

Oher business districts began to develop along major streets, as frame residences gave way to new brick commercial buildings. It was into this section of Chicago that the family of Simon and Hannah Goldblatt settled in 1903, upon emigrating from Stachov, Poland. The following year, they established a small grocery store, the Polska Skalp, at 1148 W. Chicago Ave., near Milwaukee Avenue. The family lived upstairs.

Przez Oszczędność do
Dobrobytu, Siły i Wpływu
– Oto hasło Polaków w Ameryce.
Odpowiedniem miejscem do składania waszych oszczędności na 3 procent jest dobrze znany i zaufania godny
BANK POLSKI
1201 Milwaukee Ave. róg Division ul.
Dostaniecie książeczkę Kasy Oszczędności bez jakichkolwiek kosztów składając 1 dolara lub więcej.
Bank Polski wysyła pieniądze do starego kraju i wszystkich części świata.
Sprzedaje pierwsze złotem płatne hypoteki w sumach od 300 do 5000 dol. przynoszące 5½ do 6 dolarów procentu.
Skrzynki ogniotrwałe do przechowania rzeczy wartościowych kosztują 3 dol. rocznie.
Zasoby Banku Polskiego wynoszą już przeszło 4,000,000.00.
JAN F. SMULSKI, Prezes.
JAN PRZYBYSZ i WM. H. SCHMIDT, Wice Prezesi.
T. M. HELIŃSKI, Kasyer.
M. FOERSTER, Sekretarz.
A. J. KOWALSKI i WINC. JOŹWIAKOWSKI, Ass. Kas.

A bank advertisement from the 1920s, when more than half of the residents of Chicago's West Town neighborhood were foreign born. The area's largest immigrant group was Polish.



At the turn of the century, the area surrounding the intersection of Ashland, Division, and Milwaukee avenues was commonly referred to as "Polish Downtown." The Goldblatt Bros. Department Store is located about one-half mile south of this intersection.

The Goldblatts: Merchant Kings of West Town

As part of a review of the 40-year history of the Goldblatt Bros. Department Store chain, a 1954 article in the *Chicago Daily News* noted:

> The growth of such a vast retail business by one family within one generation...is virtually unparalleled in the history of American merchandising.

In 1914, less than a decade after arriving in Chicago, 21-year-old Maurice and 19-year-old Nathan Goldblatt opened a small dry goods store in a rented building at 1617 W. Chicago Ave. (since demolished), just down the street from their family's home. According to family stories, the brothers began with an investment of $500-- the combination of a loan from their parents and their own savings from clerk jobs in dry goods and clothing stores on Milwaukee Avenue.

Success came quickly, due primarily to the brothers' aggressive marketing schemes, hard work, and keen understanding of their ethnic,

working-class clientele. For example, in order to cater to the shopping habits of working people, they established longer hours (7 a.m.-9 p.m.) than their competition, which enabled area residents to shop before and after going to work. Remembers younger brother Louis, who later joined the company:

> Our store became well known for price cutting, for underselling the competition, and for unusual bargains. Every week, we had a circular advertisement distributed door to door ...Our staging area: a small Polish neighborhood in the large city of Chicago.

The store's expansion was truly amazing. Within 13 years of its opening, Goldblatt Bros. Dry Goods expanded seven times--all along a single block of Chicago Avenue; specifically:

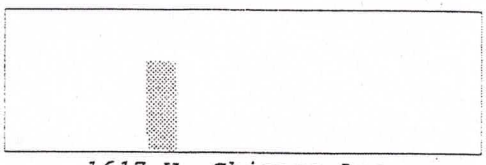
1916: the store expands onto an adjacent lot at 1621 W. Chicago (later demolished);
1918: a rear addition is constructed at 1617-21 W. (later demolished);
1921: a new three-story building is constructed at 1613-15 W. (surviving);
1923: a four-store structure is acquired at 1609-11 W. (later demolished);
1925: the original buildings (1617-21 W.) are demolished; an adjacent lot (1623 W.) is acquired; a new five-story building is constructed (1617-23 W.; surviving);
1926: the Koop Department Store, a four-story building at 1631-35 W. is acquired; the name is changed to the Louis Store;
1927: three additional buildings (1625-29 W.) are acquired and demolished; construction begins on a new five-story addition; contractors accidentally undercut foundation of Louis Store, causing it to collapse; rubble is cleared and the addition is expanded 55 feet farther west.

Louis Goldblatt reenacts his rescue of an employee from the Louis Store, which collapsed in 1927 during construction of the five-story Goldblatt Bros. Department Store building addition.

In just over a dozen years, Goldblatt's had expanded their original 1,680-square foot retail store a hundred-fold, while the store's frontage along Chicago Avenue had grown from 24 feet to 275 feet--covering most of a two-block stretch between Ashland and Paulina avenues.

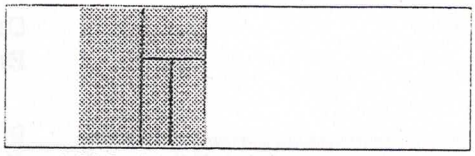
During this same time, the term "Dry Goods" was dropped from the store's name. The new title, Goldblatt Bros. Department Store, was in recognition of the store's greatly expanded line

1914



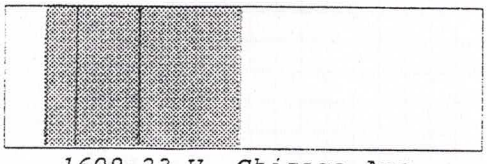
1617 W. Chicago Ave.

1921



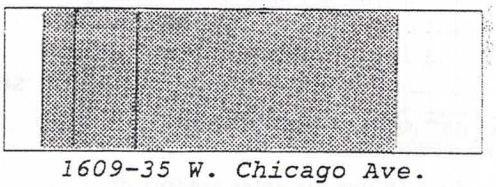
1613-21 W. Chicago Ave.

1925



1609-23 W. Chicago Ave.

1928



1609-35 W. Chicago Ave.

The original Goldblatt Bros. Dry Goods Store, 1617 W. Chicago Ave., was replaced in 1925 by the current five-story structure. Right: the store's evolution during 1914-28.

of merchandise, which included departments for: groceries, furniture, garden supplies, a pet store, barber shop and beauty salon, and for "outfitting firemen, policemen and traction employes." The store employed 600 persons, and the wide variety of goods, recalls Louis Goldblatt in his autobiography:

> Depicted the color and pace of the times and kept expanding to include important new items, such as the oilcloth used on tables, housedresses (gingham aprons), and denim overalls....Instead of behind counters, we displayed merchandise out in the open, stacked or dumped on tables. This enabled customers to see and handle it, encouraging impulse sales.

'America's Fastest-Growing Department Store'

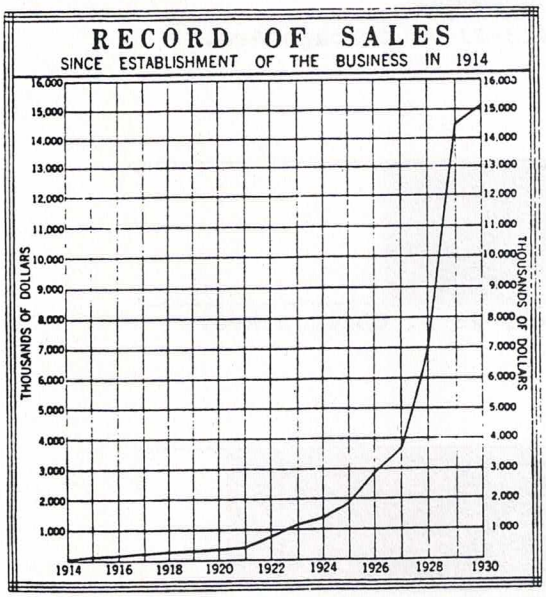
The grand opening of the store's final addition on March 12, 1928 was accompanied by a huge promotional campaign, including full-page newspaper advertisements and a 20-page flyer--distributed to each resident on the West Side--proclaiming the store's new slogan: "We Will Not Be Undersold."

Tomorrow--The Day All Chicago Has Awaited! Grand Opening of Goldblatt Bros. New Million Dollar Addition. One hundred and twenty-five departments are ready to serve your wants....Tomorrow is the commencement of a new era for Goldblatt Bros....We'll continue to lead the field with "Everyday Lowest Prices."

The company also began promoting itself as "America's Fasting Growing Department Store," a claim it continued to act on. In 1928, Goldblatt's acquired the Lederer Department Store at 47th and Ashland. The following year, it bought another Lederer's (at 91st and Commercial) and the Struve Department Store, at the intersection of Lincoln-Belmont-Ashland.

One ironic aspect of the company's growing success was that it occured during the Great Depression, which the Goldblatts actually saw as a golden opportunity for a "value-oriented store." According to Louis Goldblatt:

> We understood that manufacturers were willing to sell goods below cost for cash. Plus, we had a reputation for the lowest prices served...to customers with little cash. [We began to attract] not only the blue-collar immigrants we had always served, but others who a decade earlier had been more accustomed to shopping in...upscale traditional full-price department stores or by mail order. We also had another advantage....[We were located] in neighborhoods all over the city, where our customers were. In days when postage and streetcar fare took scarce pennies, one could shop at Goldblatt's without needing either.



This chart shows the sales volume of Goldblatt Bros. between its founding in 1914 and 1930.

A story related by Joel Goldblatt gives a sense of the company's business acumen:

> In 1933, when President Roosevelt called a bank holiday, [brother] Nate collected all the cash in all the stores--about $300,000--and took all the buyers to New York on the train, knowing that he could pick up bargains from the cash-starved suppliers.

These types of gambles proved a huge success and Goldblatt's continued to prosper, in spite of the hard economic times. By 1936, Goldblatt's had a total of nine stores: Joliet, Ill.; Gary and Hammond, Ind.; the Loren Miller Store at Broadway and Racine; and a downtown store, the former Rothschild-Davis store at State and Van Buren Streets (now the De Paul University Center).

"No other company in the United States approached the scale of the Goldblatt's operations at that time," according to Richard Longstreth, a George Washington University professor who has researched the history of department stores between 1920 and 1960.

Visit Our Cafeteria—5th Floor
Manicure—35c Beauty Parlor—5th Floor
Children's Hair Cutting 20c—5th Floor
Maxwell House Coffee, 3 lb. can....$1.15
Polarine Oil, lubricant, 5 gallon can..$2.49
Big Ben Alarm Clocks, $3.50 value..$1.79
Star Alarm Clocks, $1.00 value.....49c
Oh Henry Bars, special, 2 for.....5c
27x27 Diapers, 12 in a package.....99c
6 lb. Hotpoint Irons, $5.00 value.....$2.92
Lacquered Bottle Caps, gross.....11 1-2c
AMERICA'S FASTEST GROWING DEPT STORE
GOLDBLATT BROS DEPT STORE
1609-35 W. CHICAGO AVE.—AT ASHLAND
Maraschino Cherries, 5 lbs. limit.....23c
Van Heusen, Arrow, Aratex Semi-Soft Collars, slight substandards, ea. 12 1-2c
Overalls, $1.50 value (union made), sizes to 44.....79c
25c Woodburys Soap, special, bar.11 1-2c
Epsom Salts, 1 pound box.....5c
Listerine Tooth Paste, 25c size.....14c
No Phone or Mail Orders
We Reserve Right to Limit Quantities
GRAND OPENING SALE
20 PAGES
We've spread the tidings of our Great Grand Opening to all parts of Chicago. A Half Million 20-page circulars, full newspaper size, have been distributed to local homes. If you fail to receive copy, ask one of our cashiers for same.
America's Fastest Growing Department Store!
STORE HOURS MONDAY 9 A. M. to 9 P. M.
GOLDBLATT BROS
GOLDBLATT BROS
GOLDBLATT BROS

By 1928, when this advertisement appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*, the Goldblatt Bros. Department Store stretched 275 feet along Ashland Avenue. In order to exaggerate its prominence, the illustrator widened the building--from its actual 13 bays to a slightly grander 18 bays.

Together with Chicago-based Wieboldt's, these two great department stores...represented a nearly unique phenomenon in the country prior to World War II. Goldblatt's, especially, was a pioneer in establishing retailing methods that would become hallmarks of department store development during the second half of the century.

A 1937 article in *Business Week* magazine termed the rise of Goldblatt's "one of the intensely interesting stories of contemporary retailing."

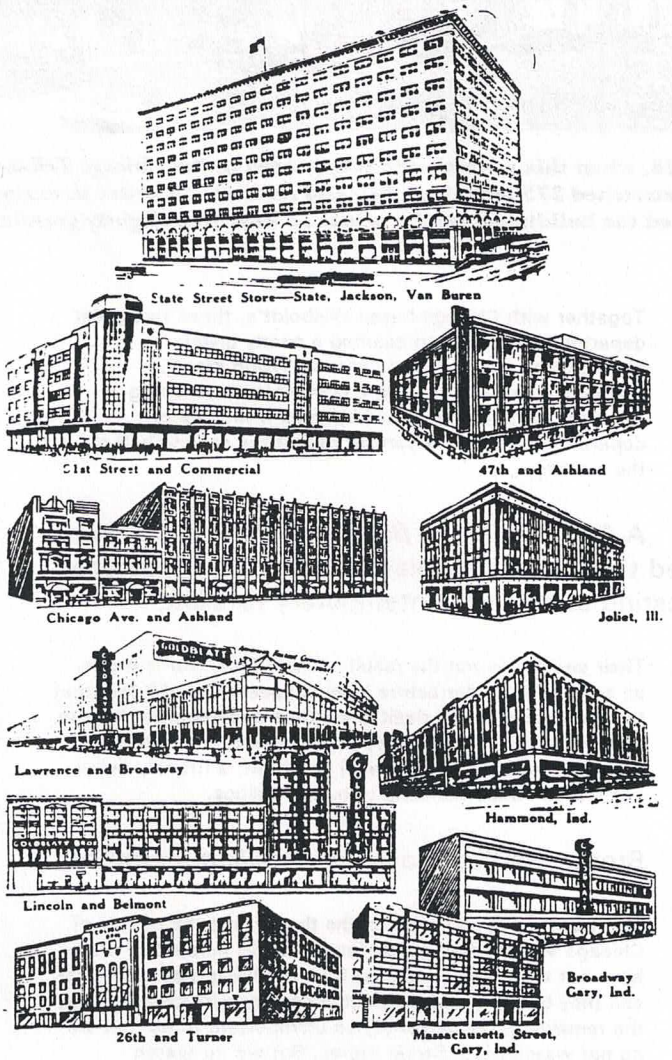
Their success is not the result of mere luck. Nor is it due, as some of their detractors have suggested, to the fact that they have sometimes dealt in distress merchandise. It rests on two facts: first, that they feature price, and beneath that, on the fact that [Maurice] Goldblatt, a friendly fellow, has a broad understanding of human beings.

Brother Nathan noted in *Retailing* magazine:

This business is operated on the theory that the people of Chicago want to buy goods [and] that 95 percent of them have not the money to spend for everything they want, nor can they buy anything without considering its cost. In fact, the remaining five percent is so unimportant to us that we do not watch State Street stores. But we do watch Woolworth, Kresge, Walgreen, the A&P, and other stores catering to the people that have to watch their pennies.

In 1944, Nathan Goldblatt, the company's co-founder, died of cancer at age 49. Two years later, brother Maurice retired as Goldblatt's chief executive officer, shifting his energy to raising money for the Nathan Goldblatt Cancer Research Foundation, as well as heart research efforts at the University of Chicago. He also served on several national medical councils. He died in 1984.

Following World War II, brothers Joel and Louis assumed company operations, and Goldblatt's continued to expand, with new shopping center stores in Chicago and outlying suburbs, as well as in Champaign, Decatur, Rockford, Springfield, Ill., Racine, Wis., South Bend, Ind., and Benton Harbor, Mich. They also acquired the Wasson's department store chain in



By 1936, the Goldblatt's chain consisted of 11 stores.

Indianapolis, Ind., bringing the total number of stores, in 1969, to 40.

Beginning in the late 1970s, the chain went through a series of management changes in an attempt to adjust to new retailing markets. In 1981, the company filed for bankruptcy and was taken over by JG Industries, Inc. The new company continued to maintain a series of stores as discount retail outlets, including the Chicago Avenue branch, which finally closed in 1996.

Neighborhood Department Stores as a Retailing Type

Chicago's first "department store," the Fair Store, began at the corner of State and Adams streets in 1875. Its founder, Ernest J. Lehmann, adopted a different merchandising strategy than such established "dry goods" stores as Marshall Field's, which specialized in higher-grade apparel and fabrics. According to Joseph Siry's history of State Street retailing, the Fair Store:

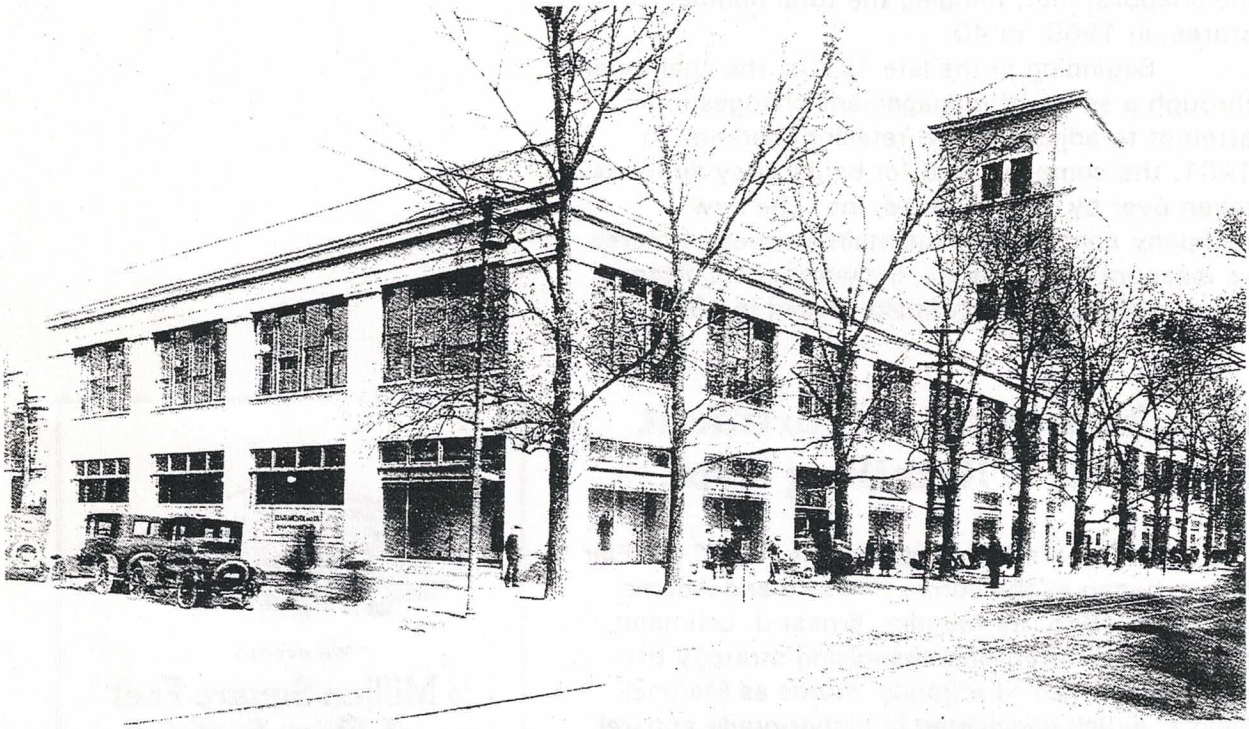
> carried a diverse inventory which included almost every conceivable item of personal and household use....a strategy that may have derived from the conditions of the [1873] Depression...when many specialty stores branched out into other lines to sustain overall sales and thus keep their businesses alive....Lehmann thus promoted his store as an attraction to a wide range of buyers because his premises were a combination of many stores offering centralized shopping under one roof...creating 'departments' as large, ever-changing collections of wares in the spirit of an ongoing bazaar...or Fair.

Furthermore, the city's rapid growth in the late-19th and early-20th centuries created a rapidly expanding market for retail merchandise. "The fact that the vast majority of these people were of modest means when they arrived in the city," notes Siry, "perhaps accounts for the extraordinary growth of stores like The Fair that were devoted to large assortments of less expensive items."

Meanwhile, as the city grew, its outlying retail areas also began to expand into larger full-service shopping districts. By 1920, "these Miniature Chicagos had become like smaller cities within a big city," observed one city directory. And, according to *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis*, "Nothing, perhaps, illustrated the significance of these new commercial centers so well as the story of Chicago's department stores."

Northwest Side's Popular Shopping Center
We occupy
¼ Million Square Feet of Floor Space
and are recognized as Northwest Side's Largest Shopping Center. We carry complete Stocks in all lines of General Merchandise. Our Grocery and Provision Departments have been the source of supply to thousands of homes. The great popularity of this Wonder Store has been achieved by adhering to the policy of giving our patrons, the very highest quality for the least possible cost.
WIEBOLDT'S

Two Chicago department stores, Goldblatt's and Wieboldt's, were national leaders in the creation of large neighborhood department stores. Above: a 1910 advertisement for the Wieboldt's store at 1275-93 Milwaukee Ave. Note the striking similarities between the store logos (see page 12).



Sears, Roebuck & Co. was another early department store chain, although its stores actually were an outgrowth of the company's existing mail order business. Sears' first neighborhood store, at 1900 W. Lawrence Ave. (above), was built in 1925, about the time that Goldblatt's was beginning to dramatically expand its Chicago Avenue store.

Most of the city's outlying retail districts had long been served by small dry goods stores, such as the one the Goldblatts started on West Chicago Avenue in 1914. However, as the population density of these largely ethnic areas began to grow, these stores began to expand their functions in much the same manner as the great stores of the Loop. The major difference is that the neighborhood stores were oriented to lower prices and the "one-stop shopping" conveniences best suited for their lower-income clientele.

Goldblatt's was not alone in this regard. Other once-small neighborhood stores, such as Klein's (in the Maxwell Street area) and Wieboldt's (at Milwaukee and Ashland), transformed themselves into large department stores--or "shopping centers" according to one store ad--during the first decades of the 20th century.

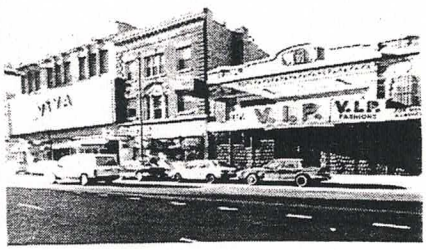
Even Chicago-based Sears, Roebuck and Co. began to expand its mail-order business during this period, by opening neighborhood retail stores across the nation. One of the first Sears retail stores, which still survives at 1900 W. Lawrence Ave., was built in 1925.

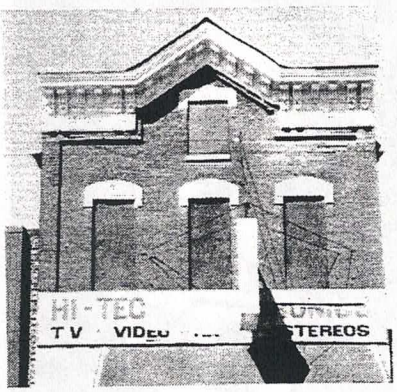
The impact of these large neighborhood department stores on their surrrounding retail districts was substantial. In the case of the Goldblatt's store, it helped transform a section of Chicago Avenue that, a *Women's Wear Daily* article noted, "had never been considered among the leading of the city's neighborhood shopping sections...."

> Goldblatt Brothers have been no small factor in its [redevelopment, bringing] customers from a steadily growing radius, the bulk, of course, being from the north and northwest sides. It is claimed that this is the most densely populated district of Chicago, containing many homes of people of moderate means.

The address listings in a 1928 directory depict a vibrant commercial district stretching to either side of Ashland Avenue, including a bank (at 1604 W. Chicago Ave.); two movie theaters (1612-14 and 1742 W.); a Kresge's (1637-49) and Woolworth's (1734); an A. & P. grocery store (1453); three large furniture stores (1547, 1620, and 1709); a competitor, the Leader Store (1533-39); a variety of dress shops; and numerous barbers, dentists, and lawyers.

Building permit records confirm that a number of early structures--dating from the 1870s-90s--still survive along Chicago Avenue (at 1458, 1523-27, 1524, 1541-53, 1644, 1700, and 1707). Several of them retain their original cast-iron storefronts. However, a second commercial boom took place around the time of the Goldblatt's expansions, and includes many excellent examples of terra cotta facades (at 1538, 1552-54, 1620-24, and 1709-13). The latter building still sports the initials, "GFCo.," for the General Furniture Co.





Many commmercial buildings along Chicago Avenue date from the period of Goldblatt's expansion (above, 1612-20 W.). Others date from the 1880s (below, 1644 W.).

The Architecture of the Goldblatt Bros. Buildings

The two remaining Goldblatt Bros. buildings on Chicago Avenue are among the best-preserved, surviving examples of this type of early neighborhood department store--either in Chicago or throughout the United States.

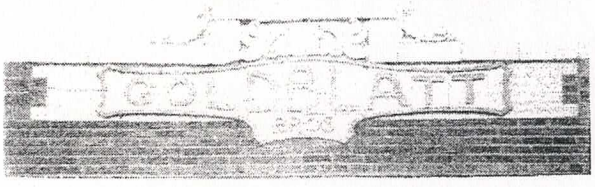
Both buildings were designed by **Alfred S. Alschuler (1876-1940)**, a noted architect of the period. A native of Mattoon, Ill., Alschuler studied architecture at the Armour Institute of Technology (now IIT) and the Art Institute of Chicago. He went

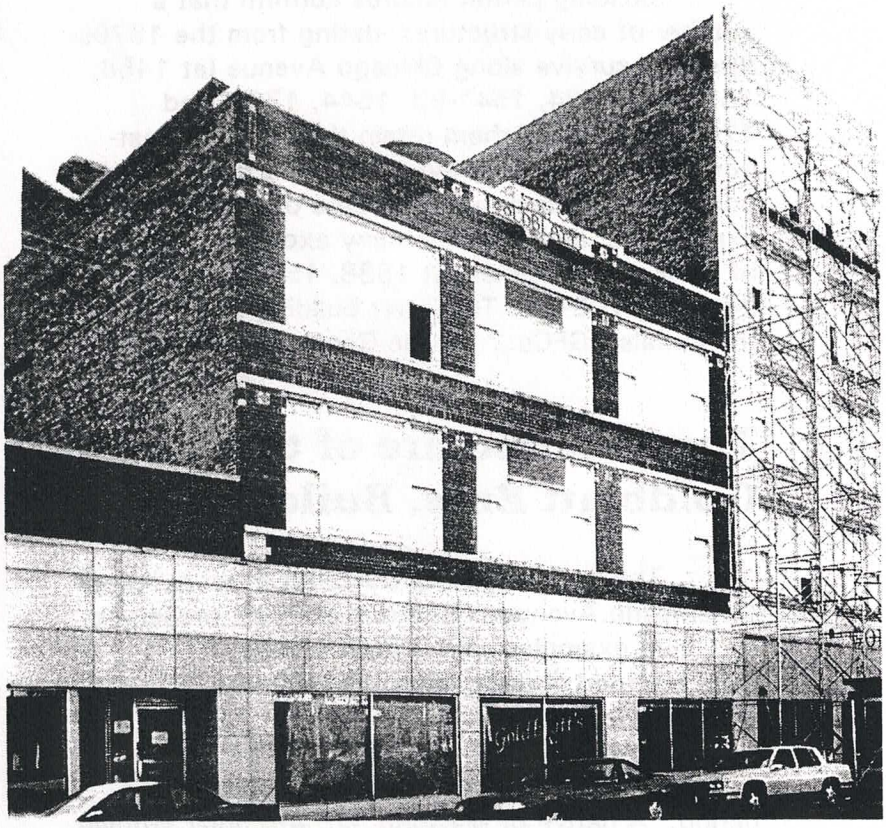
to work for Dankmar Adler in 1900. In 1903, he formed a partnership with Samuel A. Treat.

In 1907, Alschuler began an independent practice that developed into one of the city's largest architectural offices during the century's second and third decades, a period when the city was developing a large manufacturing base. The firm produced a wide range of structures characteristic of the period, including public buildings, automobile showrooms, synogogues, and dozens of buildings in the Central Manufacturing District at 35th and Ashland.

Two of Alschuler's most notable commissions from the 1920s--when he designed the Goldblatt Bros. Department Store buildings--are: the London Guarantee and Accident Building (360 N. Michigan Ave.), which won a 1923 Gold Medal for design excellence, and the K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Temple (1926; 1100 Hyde Park Blvd.). Both are designated Chicago Landmarks.

According to a biographical sketch of Alschuler written in 1986:





The oldest portion of Goldblatt's, at 1613-15 W. Chicago Ave., was built in 1921-22. Its three-story facade features ornamental brickwork, terra cotta details, and a pediment featuring the original Goldblatt's logo (above, left). The windows have been painted an off-white color. Top left: Architect Alfred Alschuler.

At a time when the city was developing an industrial fringe dominated by otherwise nondescript functional buildings, Alschuler's harmonious and refined designs--and restrained classical detailing--were changing the texture of the city.

Alschuler's designs for the Goldblatt Bros. Department Store are a testament to that fact, particularly as they relate to the texture of the Chicago-Ashland Avenue commercial district.

The smaller and earliest of these buildings, at 1613-15 W. Chicago Ave., is consistent with the scale and design of surrounding commercial structures. Built in 1921-22, its three-story brick facade is trimmed with gray-streaked, terra cotta banding and smaller blue-and-white terra cotta insets. A slightly raised central pediment is adorned with the Goldblatt Bros. logo.

The building's 48-foot-wide facade is divided into three bays, each consisting of a single Chicago School-style window; i.e., a large, fixed-pane of glass flanked by operable, double-hung windows. The upper two stories are intact, although the window panes have been painted over. The ground-floor storefronts were covered with enamel panels, c.1950.

Dominating the Chicago Avenue streetscape is the store's five-story, 200-foot-long "addition" at 1617-35 W. Chicago, which was constructed in two phases. The easternmost 75 feet (five bays) was built in 1925; the remaining 125 feet (eight bays) was added in 1927.

The five-story "addition" to the Goldblatt's store, at 1621-35 W. Chicago Ave., was built during 1925-28. It features large Chicago windows and a wealth of terra cotta details. (This photograph is a composite of four different photos, which accounts for the irregular nature of the roofline and storefronts.)

Above: Unlike such Chicago School commercial structures as the Graphics Arts Building (1904; 1006 S. Michigan Ave.), Goldblatt's does not have a projecting cornice. Below: another of architect Alfred Alschuler's designs, the London Guarantee Building (1923), at Michigan and Wacker.

Nonetheless, the building presents a single, unified facade design. One of the few indications that it was built in two phases is the location of the lettering of the two original "Goldblatt Bros." signs, which are cast in cream-colored terra cotta above the storefronts. One sign was centered on the facade of the 1925 section; the other was centered on the 1927-28 addition. A close inspection of the building's terra cotta details also reveals *very* slight deviations between the two phases. (The building's south elevation, which is constructed of brick, also gives indications of where the two additions come together.)

In height and appearance, the terra cotta-clad Goldblatt Bros. building is clearly the dominant visual feature of this section of West Town, providing a dramatic, yet complementary, contrast to the appearance of the neighboring structures fronting on Chicago Avenue. According to historian Richard Longstreth, "its design is fully representative of the better neighborhood commercial buildings of the period."

A popular building material of the early 20th century, terra cotta was often used for showy commercial structures, such as auto showrooms and department stores; most notably, the Carson Pirie Scott & Co. Building at State and Madison. Architect Alschuler had used terra cotta on numerous commissions, including the downtown London Guarantee Building, in order to provide a richness of architectural detailing. In this instance, the source of the material was the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company of Chicago.

The building's 200-foot-long facade is divided into 13 bays, which relate to the spacing of the structure's underlying steel-frame columns and reinforced concrete floors and partitions. Between each of the terra cotta-clad piers is a single "Chicago window," composed of a large, fixed central pane flanked by operable, double-hung windows. According to news accounts:

> The new store will not only be one of the largest department stores outside Chicago's Loop, but one of the lightest, the fronts of the five floors facing north on Chicago Avenue being devoted largely to wide windows....There is one square foot of window lighting for every 25 square feet of floor space.

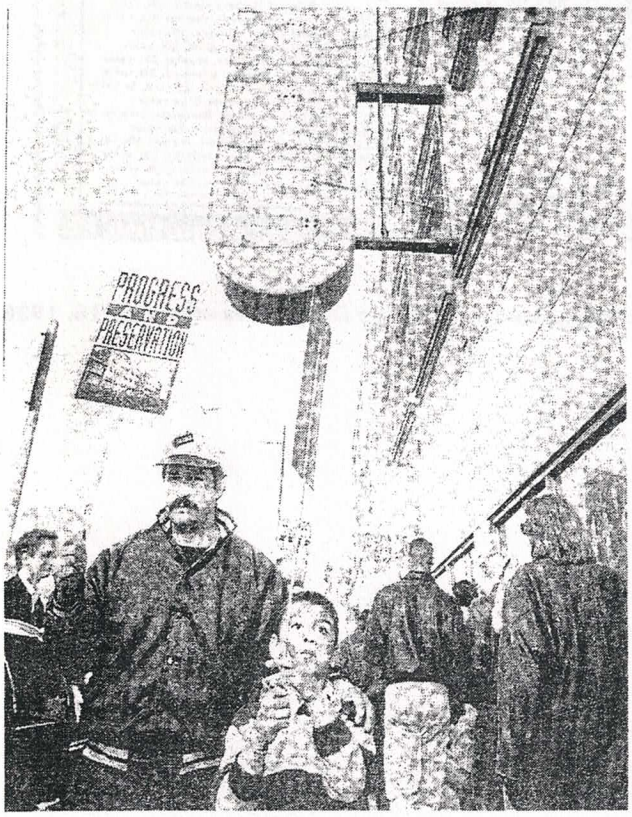
This style of window, which was popularized by such Chicago School buildings as

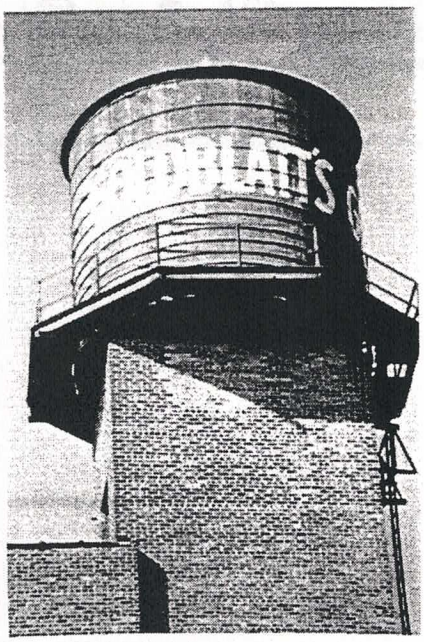
Carson Pirie Scott, the Chicago Building, the Gage Group, and the Reliance Building, was a perfect solution for a commercial department store. It provided a maximum amount of natural light, while allowing for natural ventilation.

The building's ground floor featured large display windows and three entrances. Above the storefronts is a wide band of terra cotta featuring the store's name. Although the storefronts were partially covered with metal panels, c.1950, they still retain most of their original character.

Unlike earlier Chicago School commercial designs, the Goldblatt Bros. Department Store has no projecting cornice. Instead, the vertical piers extend through the cornice, terminating in small obelisks that further emphasize the building's verticality. This style of cornice, which is detailed with slightly arching, terra cotta ornament, was popular throughout the 1920s.

A four-story-tall sign, which had adorned the front of the building since 1928, was removed as part of some preparatory demolition work in January 1997. Otherwise, the building retains its original integrity, including a distinctive wood water tower featuring the Goldblatt's name.





West Town residents (left) protest the proposed demolition of Goldblatt's in October 1996. Even the building's water tower (right) is a visual landmark for the West Town neighborhood.

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS, FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 1928.
Polarine Oil, 5-Gallon Can .. 2.44
75c
Tube, 24c
Big Ben Alarm Clocks 1.75
We Reserve Right to Limit Quantity
No Phone or Mail Orders
AMERICA'S FASTEST GROWING DEPT STORE
GOLDBLATT BROS STORE
DEP'T.
1609-35 W. CHICAGO AVE.-AT ASHLAND
ANOTHER SCOOP!
Goldblatt Bros. Buy ENTIRE STOCK
of LUBLINER and ROSENBERG
Formerly Located in
LEITER BLDG. STORES
Lamps-Shades-Notions
Bird Cages-Fancy Goods and Candy On Sale Tomorrow at
Less than 40¢ on the $
Goldblatt Bros. Score Another "Spot Cash" Purchase! Our Gigantic Buying Power Swings 40c on $1 Buy!
Lubliner & Rosenberg Stock of Fancy Goods
STAMPED GLASS TOWELS 5c
STAMPED BEDSPREADS 68c
SATIN PILLOWS 78c
SASH CURTAINS 27c
RAYON PILLOWS 88c
CRETONNE PILLOWS 16c
STAMPED VOILE PILLOWS 23c
STAMPED KITCHEN APRONS 15c
GLASS BEADS 2c
CRINKLE CREPE SPREADS 1.28
D. M. C. CROCKET COTTON 13c
STAMPED KITCHEN CURTAINS 27c
LAMP SHADES 98c
LUBLINER & ROSENBERG STOCK OF FRESH CANDIES
Assorted Candies 10c
BUNTE'S 19c
ELINE'S 2 for 5c
OH! HENRY 2 for 5c
Salted Almonds 23c
Cherry Eggs 37c
$1 Box of Chocolates FAMOUS BRANDS 36c
Mary Lane 25c
Caramels 25c
Fruit Balls 16c
Bunte's Kindergarten Mixed 12½c
REID'S BUTTER SCOTCH 17c
ORANGE TANGERINES 12½c
Bunte's Candies 17c
LAMPS! Below Cost!
Lubliner & Rosenberg STOCK OF NOTIONS! SALE!
Sanitary Belts, regular 19c value, each 9c
Rubberized Aprons, for women, regular 59c val 39c
Hickory Girdles, all sizes, regular 75c value 49c
Trimming Braid, 3-yard pieces, 15c value
Straight Pins, 200 count, regular 5c value
Dress Shields, white and flesh, 29c value
Garment Bags, of cretonne, $1.49 value
Shoe Bags, 8-pocket, regular 39c value
Children's Rubber Aprons, regular 49c value
Women's Rubber Aprons, large sizes, 95c value
Sanitary Belts, of Hickory elastic, 29c value
Hickory Sanitary Aprons, regular 49c value
Baby Rubber Pants, all sizes, 39c value
Men's Paris Garters, all colors, 50c value
Corset Sew-Ons, Hickory, regular 25c value
Women's Fancy Garters, trimmed, 29c value
Darning Cotton, mercerized, 45-yard, 5c value
Elastic, ¼ inch wide, white, 6½c value
75c Value Hickory Skirts, Bloomers, Step-ins, et
Baby Rubber Pants, all sizes, 49c value
Clothes Brushes, bristle hair, regular 59c value
Shirred Ribbons, ¾-yard lengths, 29c value
¼ Yard Elastic, black and colors, 15c value
Twilled Tape, 8-yard pieces, 15c value
Lubliner & Rosenberg Stock of Cages, Stands, E

An advertisement for the Goldblatt Bros. Department Store, from the *Chicago Daily News* of March 16, 1928.

APPENDICES

Criteria for Designation

The following criteria, as set forth in Section 2-210-620 of the Chicago Municipal Code, should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether the Goldblatt Bros. Department Store buildings should be recommended for landmark designation:

CRITERION 1
Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois or the United States.

These buildings have a direct relationship to the economic history of Chicago and of the United States. It is the first department store established by the Goldblatt brothers, a prominent regional retailing chain that, according to historian Richard Longstreth, "was a pioneer in establishing retailing methods that would become hallmarks of department store development during the second half of the 20th century."

The store's "value-oriented services" and more than 100 different departments in a single neighborhood location--including such then-innovative department store features as automotive parts, beauty salons, garden centers, pet stores, and uniforms--made Goldblatt Bros. ideally suited to serve cash-strapped customers during the Great Depresssion of the 1930s. According to Louis Goldblatt:

> We had a reputation for the lowest prices served [and we were located] in neighborhoods all over the city, where our customers were. In days when postage and streetcar fare took scarce pennies, one could shop at Goldblatt's without needing either.

Within 40 years of its founding as a small dry goods store on Chicago Avenue, in the city's densely populated "Polish Downtown," Goldblatt Bros. had grown into a chain of several dozen stores throughout a four-state area. As part of a review of the company's history, a 1954 article in

the *Chicago Daily News* noted:

> The growth of such a vast retail business by one family within one generation...is virtually unparalleled in the history of American merchandising.

CRITERION 3

Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the development of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.

The story of the Goldblatt brothers and their creation of one of America's leading department store chains is a classic rags-to-riches tale, one that is emblematic of Chicago's ethnic immigration in the early 20th century.

The company's amazing expansion, from the 1920s through the 1950s, made the Goldblatt family nationally recognized. The Goldblatt brothers were profiled in numerous national publications, and the Goldblatt name was renown for its retailing innovations.

Following the death of Nathan Goldblatt in 1944, brother Maurice shifted most of his energies to philanthropy. Through his fundraising abilities, he helped established a cancer center at the University of Chicago, and he continued to be a leading philanthropic leader in the fields of heart and cancer research until his death in 1984.

In addition, the designer of the Goldblatt buildings, Alfred S. Alschuler (1876-1940), was one of the city's most prolific architects during the early 20th century. His firm produced a wide range of well-designed structures characteristic of this era, including public buildings, automobile showrooms, synogogues, industrial structures, and apartment buildings.

Two of Alschuler's best-known works are the London Guarantee and Accident Building (1923; 360 N. Michigan Ave.) and the K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Temple (1926; 1100 Hyde Park Blvd.). Both are designated Chicago Landmarks.

CRITERION 4

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship.

The two Goldblatt Bros. buildings on Chicago Avenue are among the best-preserved, surviving examples of early neighborhood department stores in Chicago or the U.S.

The Goldblatt Bros. Department Store was identified as a "significant structure" by both the Chicago Historic Resources Survey and the Illinois Historic Structures Survey. The two store buildings are considered to be high-quality examples of the late-Chicago School commercial style, featuring such traditional elements of the style as "Chicago windows" and terra cotta cladding and details.

The use of broad windows on commercial buildings had been introduced at the turn of the century by such architects as Holabird & Roche and Louis Sullivan. The Goldblatt Bros. Department Store, however, represents an early large-scale example of this type of commercial design on a neighborhood department store. Noted one contemporary news account:

> The new store will not only be one of the largest department stores outside Chicago's Loop, but one of the lightest, the fronts...being devoted largely to wide windows....There is one square foot of window lighting for every 25 square feet of floor space.

CRITERION 7

Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.

The Goldblatt Bros. Department Store is truly a visual landmark. It has been the most dominant feature of this portion of Chicago Avenue since its construction in 1925-28, and its survival makes it an irreplaceable physical anchor to the Chicago-Ashland commercial district.

The rapid expansion of the Goldblatt Bros. store--from a 25-foot-wide storefront in 1914 to a 275-foot-long blockfront in 1928--was integral to the very development of this commercial district. Countless other buildings were erected in its aftermath and, by the 1930s, this area included two movie theaters, three large furniture store structures, a major grocery store, several drug store chains, and countless smaller buildings.

The five-story facade of Goldblatt's dominates the streetscape in virtually every direction and its distinctive water tower is visible for blocks.

Due to its size and distinctive design, Goldblatt's is a dominant presence in the West Town neighborhood, whether viewed from the north (above) or south.

Significant Historical and Architectural Features

Whenever a building or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks identifies the property's significant features, in order for the owners and the public to understand which elements are most important to the landmark.

This determination also is important in carrying out the Commission's permit review responsibility, which is to evaluate the effect of proposed alterations to "any significant historical or architectural feature" of the landmark (as required by Section 2-120-770, 780).

Based on its evaluation of the Goldblatt Bros. Department Store, the staff recommends that the significant historical and architectural feature for the preservation of this building is:

- the north (Chicago Avenue) elevation, including its roofline.

Building Integrity and Rehabilitation Issues

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks bases its review of all city-issued permits related to a landmark property on its published *Guidelines for Alterations to Historic Buildings and New Construction*. The purpose of the Commission's review is to protect and enhance the landmark's "significant historical and architectural features."

The integrity of the Goldblatt Bros. Department Store is very high; that is, the exterior of the two remaining buildings retains virtually all of the original features that characterized them during their initial development.

The only significant alteration occurs at the ground level, where the original storefronts have been covered over (c.1950) by porcelain enamel panels. It is believed that the original building features are still located underneath these panels. In addition, the glass panes on both buildings have been painted. This can be easily corrected and, if so, would have a major impact on bringing back the buildings' original character.

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We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Professor Richard Longstreth, who generously shared his unpublished research from the forthcoming, *Department Store Transformed, 1920-60.*

Acknowledgments

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Christopher R. Hill, Acting Commissioner
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Cedric Jones, production
James Peters, writing/research/layout
Timothy Barton, research
Timothy Samuelson, research

Illustrations
From *Chicago Tribune*: front, back, and inside back covers; p. 7, 15 left
From *Chicago: A Century of Progress* (1933): inside front cover
From Central Manufacturing District magazine (Dec. 1934): p. 1
From *Ethnic Chicago*: p. 2
Dept. of Planning and Development: pp. 3, 5, 11-14, 15 rt., 19
From *Life is a Game; Play to Win*: pp. 4, 5
Courtesy of Richard Longstreth: pp. 6, 8
From *A Half Century of Chicago Building* (1910): p. 9
From *Chicago Architecture, 1872-1922*: p. 10
From *Handbook for Architects and Builders, 1938-39*: p. 12 left

Visit Our Delicatessen—5th Floor

Maxwell House Coffee, 1 lb. can ..... $.15
Pelarine Oil, lubricant, 5 gallon can $2.49
Big Ben Alarm Clocks, $3.50 value $1.79
Star Alarm Clocks, $1.00 value 49c
Oh Henry Bars, special, 2 for 5c
27x27 Diapers, 12 in package 89c
6 lb. Hotpoint Irons, $5.00 value $2.92
Lacquered Bottle Caps, gross 11 1-2c

No Phone or Mail Orders

Manicure—Silo Beauty Parlor—5th Floor

Children's Hair Cutting 25c—5th Floor

Manufacturers' Clearance Sale Shirts
Van Heusen, Arrow, Arnold & Semi-Soft Collars, slight substandards, ea. 12c
Overalls, $1.50 value (union made) sizes to 44 ..... $
25c Woodbury's Soap, special, bar 11c
Epsom Salts, 4 pound box 1
Listerine Tooth Paste, 25c size 1

We Reserve the Right to Limit Quantities

GRAND OPENING SALE

20 PAGES

We've spread the tidings of our Great Grand Opening to all parts of Chicago. A Half Million 20-page circulars, full newspaper size, have been distributed to local homes. If you fail to receive copy, ask one of our cashiers for same.

America's Fastest Growing Department Store!

AMERICA'S FASTEST GROWING DEPT. STORE

GOLDBLATT BROS DEP'T STORE

600-35 W. CHICAGO AVE.—AT ASHLAND

STORE HOURS MONDAY 9 A. M. to 9 P. M.

Tomorrow---The Day all Chicago Has Awaited! Grand Opening of Goldblatt Bros. New Million Dollar Addition---Don't Miss This Gala Event!

WELCOME to Chicago's newest department store! For many months we've worked day and night towards this gala event. Neither time nor money has been spared to give Chicago a new mercantile institution that will be a credit to our great city. You'll find a wonderful institution, in full operation; a miracle of splendor and completeness.

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE departments are ready to serve your wants. Our trained buyers are ever-watchful to give you the greatest bargains for your money. Our policy of "Everyday Lowest Prices" could hardly be maintained without their constant co-operation. Our salespeople make your shopping a delightful pleasure.

TOMORROW is the commencement of a new era for Goldblatt Bros. We pledge a continuance of better merchandise for less money. Our newspaper and circular advertising will continue to carry our sales message to all Chicagoans. We'll continue to lead the field with "Everyday Lowest Prices." We'll expect you at our Great Grand Opening!

SALES FOR MONDAY ONLY! STORE HOURS 9 A. M. to 9 P. M.

Star Alarm Clocks. 49c
Women's Watches. $1.95
New Leather Bags. 69c
Silverplate Tableware. 8½c
Women's Kerchiefs. 5c
Girls' Middies, Bloomers. 59c
Tots' Embroid'd. Dresses. 57c
Girls' Spring Dresses. 50c
Confirmation Dresses. $5.00
Porto Rican Gowns. 53c
Rayon Undies. 59c

Girls' Silk Frocks. $3.95
Trimmed Rayon Curtains $1.00
Imported Irish Point. $1.49
15 in. Lace Panels. $1.00
Rayon Panels. 59c
35 Pc. Dinner Sets. $1.00
81x90 Bed Sheets. 59c
Fort Mill Sheeting. 26c
81-Inch Bleached Sheeting 23c
Philippine Gowns. 87c
Chiffon Hose. 98c

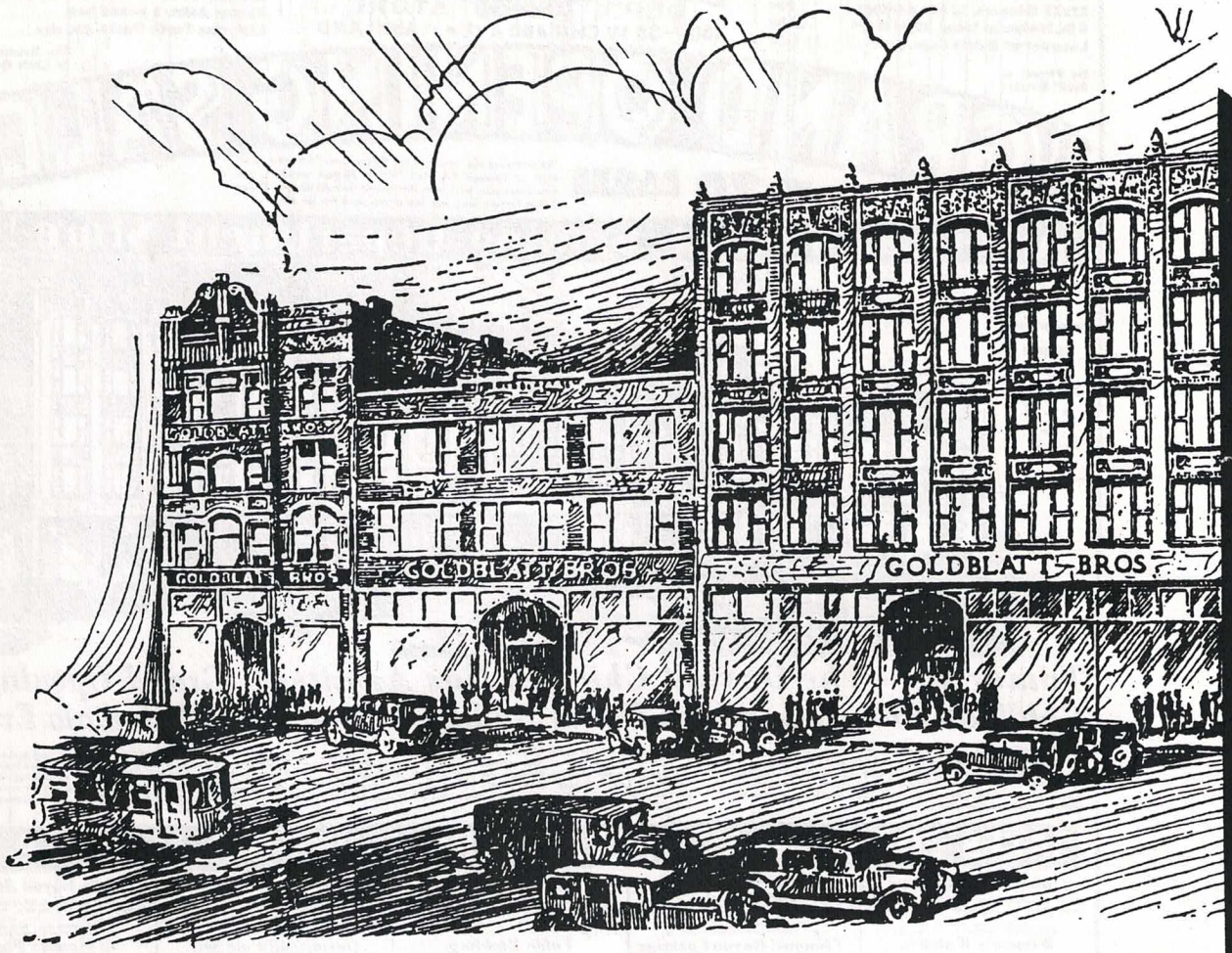
18x25 in. Pillows. 45c
Table Padding. 89c
5 Pc. Luncheon Sets. 59c
Cotton Bed Blankets. 79c
Boys' Top Coats. $2.29
Boys' Cassimere Pants. 39c
Marquisette Panels. 39c
Boys' 4 Pc. Suits. $2.99
Boys' Kaynee Blouses. 59c
King's Thread. 19c
Khaki Pants. 69c

Boys' Long Pants. 79c
Unfinished Pole Sets. 79c
3x6 Window Shades. 39c
Juliet House Slippers. 57c
Arch Support Shoes. $2.29
Ankle Patch Gym Shoes. 55c
Boys' $2.50 Shoes. $1.17
Dutch Boy White Lead. $11.75
Ready Mixed Paints. 98c
Work Shir 29c
Sport Coats. 73c

36 in. Rayon Alpaca. 18c
12 Momme Pongee. 43c
40 in. Flat Crepe. 94c
40 in. Sport Satin. 64c
$4.50 Bridge Lamp. $2.47
9x12 ft. Velour Rugs. $26.95
Floor Covering. 25c
Union Hardware Skates $1.39
Tussah Pongee. 25c
Silk Hose. 50c
Men's Turkish Union Suits 3

STAR BARS 20c
HEAD LETTUCE 5c
CAVIAR 29c
BLACK PEAS $1.98
SWISS CHEESE 3

The full-page advertisement that ran in the *Chicago Sunday Tribune* on March 11, 1928, announcing the grand opening of the Goldblatt Bros. new department store building.



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